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the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

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The Urgency of Spiritual Reconstruction

On January 23, 1948, the Administrative Committee and the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches passed the following resolution, which was sent to member Churches with a letter signed by the five Presidents of the Provisional Committee: Pastor Marc Boegner, Dr Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Eidem, Archbishop of Upsala, Dr Germanos, Archbishop of Thyateira, and Dr John R. Mott. The resolution has just been released. It reads:

"The Administrative Committee of the World Council of Churches, having been made aware of the dangers threatening the continuation of the programme of the Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid, because of the decreased resources at the disposal of that Department for the support of the work of the Churches in Europe, and believing that this is an ecumenical task of all the Churches, resolves to call upon all member-Churches of the World Council to give new consideration to the needs of the Churches which that Department seeks to meet, to assure that the splendid achievements of the past three years are safeguarded and that the work of Christian reconstruction is carried forward vigorously.

"The Committee desires to point out that the continuing needs of the Churches are great, both on the material side and on the spiritual side. Material relief is needed, particularly by institutions and members of both the Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Churches, and the flow of food and clothing from more fortunate lands has done much to help the less fortunate. Nevertheless, it is the judgment of the Committee that the greater task of the Department is to provide for the spiritual reconstruction and rehabilitation of Church life on the Continent. Through a programme of spiritual aid the Department, given sufficient funds, will be able to contribute to those plans, projects and programmes of the Churches which are vital to the reviving of the Christian life of the Continent. The need for such a programme of spiritual reconstruction is self-evident, as is the fact that the support of such a programme is the specific obligation of the Churches, and the provision of all material aid, without the provision of spiritual aid, would leave the Churches unable to cope with the unprecedented tasks which confront them.

"The Committee notes that the decreased contributions for the work of spiritual reconstruction come at a time when the Department has succeeded in building up a staff more adequate than ever before, and when the European Churches are whole-heartedly engaged in various important and hopeful schemes for the renewal of their life. The work of the staff and the continuation of these programmes are now in jeopardy and must of necessity be curtailed, unless the Department is supported by reasonable grants. Furthermore, it notes with regret that at this important period in the history of the Department its problems are made infinitely more difficult by the increasing restrictions which are being placed on the transfer of monies between countries.

"In view of the serious problems confronting the Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid, the Administrative Committee communicates the facts of the present situation to the member-Churches of the World Council and to all Christian people, and appeals to them to remedy the present critical state of affairs by immediately increasing their grants for this work. The Committee stresses the need for reasonable sums of unearmarked monies in order to assure for the programme of the Department both flexibility and latitude, and asks the member-Churches, as they channel their grants through the appropriate committees and agencies in their own countries, to designate a sizable proportion of the total amount given for Christian reconstruction in Europe. It further requests the member-Churches to plan speedily and thoroughly a programme of long-term support of the European Churches, and to accept the responsibilities of spiritual reconstruction as one of the greatest opportunities and significant tasks of Christian history. At the same time it requests the member-Churches, in those countries where it is possible and appropriate, to arrange a time when representatives of the Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid may be given the privilege of presenting directly the problems of the Department and of showing the opportunities to help the cause of Christian life in Europe."

E.P.S.Geneva

The Future Relationship of the World Council of
Churches and the International Missionary
Council

In an article by the Rev. Norman Goodall, Secretary of the International Missionary Council, appearing in the first issue of 1948 of the "International Review of Missions", the question of the relationships of the World Council of Churches with the International Missionary Council is examined.

With the coming Amsterdam conference of the World Council the question of the distinctive functions of other ecumenical organisations is raised. The question of the future relationships of the World Council and the I.M.C. becomes unavoidable.

"The case for bringing the World Council and the I.M.C. into organisational relationships with one another", writes Mr. Goodall, "is very powerful. Apart from the question of expediency, there is a deeper logic in a purpose which is central to both bodies. The I.M.C. is concerned with the world mission of the Church. Its supreme interest - the evangelisation of the world - is a matter which belongs to the very life-blood of the Church. Although the World Council may concern itself with much else, it cannot, while remaining faithful to its name and calling, relegate this to the periphery of its interests. The two Coun-

cils are already, therefore, by reason of their nature and essential purpose, at work on common ground. They must be more and more deeply involved in common problems."

Mr. Goodall asks then what are the reasons which, "despite an obvious logic leading to the integration of the two Councils, indicate the necessity of their continued independence, at least for a lengthy period?"

"The first arises from their radically different organisational structure. The World Council is a Council of Churches", constituting a unit of membership within the Council. The International Missionary Council is a federation of Councils or Conferences organised on a regional or national basis. Parts of these Councils are not necessarily Churches. Besides, a great part of missionary work is maintained by societies which are interdenominational in their basis or undenominational.

But there exists common ground for practical cooperation. Significant progress has been made in such undertakings as the Ecumenical Press Service, the study and research work of the two bodies and the launching of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. "In February 1948, there is to be held in Manila a Joint Commission sponsored by the two Councils to discuss matters of common concern to the Churches and missions in East Asia."

In February 1946, when the Ad Interim Committee of the I.M.C. and the Provisional Committee of the World Council met for the first time since the end of the war, it was decided that the principle of interdependence should also find acknowledgment in the mutual use of the following titles : The International Missionary Council in Association with the World Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches in Association with the International Missionary Council. "No change in the structure of either Council is involved by this step... Each remains autonomous in the exercise of its distinctive mission and responsibilities; but, under a common title which points to complementary rather than rival tasks, such problems as are illustrated in the preceding paragraphs can find their solution and God's unfolding purpose for the ecumenical movement be perceived and obeyed."

E.P.S. Geneva

EGYPT

A Joint Christian Celebration

On Christmas Eve last, a group composed of clergy and laymen belonging to all the Christian Churches in Egypt, took the decision to celebrate this year 1948, the sixteenth centenary of the death of St Pakhomius, the Egyptian who first introduced a Rule for the monks in Egypt. This Rule served later on as a basis for both St Basil and St Benedict.

For the first time in Egypt, Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Copts, Armenians, Syrians and Chaldeans will unite in honouring the Egyptian saint. The celebration will be under the patronage of the four Patriarchs in Egypt - the Patriarchs of the Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria, of the Copts, of the Catholic Copts, and of the Greek Catholics. It has the blessing of the Papal Internuncio and the Bishops in Egypt, including the Anglican Bishop, are associated with it, as are the Father Superiors of the monasteries in Egypt to which visits will be paid by

the members of the group. The lectures and other acta et gesta of the group will be published under the title Pachomiana." E.P.S. Geneva

Echoes of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

In Great Britain a meeting took place in the Royal Empire Society's Hall in London, with the Dean of Windsor in the Chair, attended by representatives of the Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches. All the speakers emphasised the fundamental elements which are essential for union: a spirit of repentance, an open mind and above all a spirit of prayer.

In Sweden, in Hastvedagarden, in the diocese of Lund, about twenty priests came together for an ecumenical conference lasting two days. Three Masses were celebrated - Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Lutheran.

In France during the Week of Prayer there were numerous activities, especially among Roman Catholics. At Lyons Mass was celebrated by Cardinal Gerlier, the sermon being preached by Father Clémence. Mgr. Chevrot gave a lecture in which he showed that the only force which can break down the barriers dividing men is charity. He seized the opportunity of the Week of Prayer to allude to the plight of the Protestants in Spain and to protest against the acts of vandalism which had been perpetrated against them. "My brothers, who are separated today", he concluded, "even if we have not yet built any ladders high enough to scale the walls which divide us, we have at our disposal a force which is powerful enough to undermine them: our charity". At Metz, for the first time since the Reformation, Roman Catholics and Protestants met together under the sign of Christian unity. The crowd was so large in the meeting-hall, that a second meeting had to be held in the evening. The Roman Catholic delegation was presided over by Mgr. Schmit surrounded by a large number of priests, professors and members of religious orders and congregations; while the President of the Reformed Consistory was also surrounded by his collaborators. The procession of choirs lasted two hours, singing together "the sweetest mystery of Christendom: Christmas".

In Paris an ecumenical service was held on January 29, at the Anglican Church in the rue d'Aguesseau. It was attended by clergy from the Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed and Methodist (French and foreign) Churches. Bishop Chambers from the Church of England and Pastor Marc Boegner spoke on the prayer of Christ, "That they may be one, as we are one". The blessing was pronounced by Metropolitan Vladimir. The choir of Russian youth movements took part in this service. An other ecumenical meeting was organised by the Orthodox Institute of Saint-Denis at the Church of St. Irénée, attended by the Archimandrite van der Mensbrugghe, and by Reformed, Lutheran and Anglican clergy. Many Roman Catholic priests also came and joined in these ecumenical prayers.

In Germany a Roman Catholic theologian, Karl Adam, spoke in Stuttgart at the Evangelical Church of St. Mark. It must be 400 years since a Catholic theologian spoke in an Evangelical church to both Catholics and Protestants on the questions of faith which unite and - still - divide Christians. For three evenings over two thousand people listened with rapt attention to the captivating, passionate words of the learned speaker.

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In Switzerland during the Week of Prayer a very outstanding article appeared in a Catholic journal, the "Courrier de Genève". After sketching the effort towards unity and its present tendencies, the author goes on: "Ever since the Reformation until now, Christianity has tended to become more and more divided. But today the trend is clearly in the opposite direction - towards concentration and unity. This is a new fact, which has considerable religious and social importance... Ecumenical work will therefore be carried on in future under a different theological climate... The problem of the Church, its nature, its message, and its unity will therefore be the main object of the very important meetings which are to be held shortly. At these meetings the delegates will examine the Christian attitude to capitalism (which has not resigned itself to dying) and to materialistic totalitarianism which is attracting the masses and threatening to submerge Europe. How one longs to hear some Roman Catholic with authority raise his voice there!"

E.P.S. Geneva

Bishop Fjellbu on World Ecumenicity

Bishop Arne Fjellbu of Trondhjem, Norway, who is in the United States on a two-months visit at the invitation of the American Committee for the World Council of Churches, declared after his arrival in New York that Norwegians are divided in many ways prior to World War II but that hostilities had taught them "world ecumenicity".

"When the war came and Christians in Norway had a common enemy in the Nazis, all differences were forgotten and we stood together, a united Church, stripped of diversions with an affirmation of faith in the Church as the Body of Christ. This common struggle also included other denominations who did not belong to the established Church. The Roman Catholic Church showed its sympathy in our fight. We had, in those years, a unity in Norway that was ecumenical in the highest degree."

Now the Norwegian people were looking forward to the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches "as a possible source of hope and salvation for our world today." Bishop Fjellbu said it was important for Western churchmen to keep contact with Eastern Orthodox churchmen and "it is of great value that we as churchmen keep contact with Russian churchmen."

E.P.S. Geneva

YUGOSLAVIA

Fraternal Relations Between Orthodox and Reformed Christians

In Tordinici, Croatia, is an ancient Croatian Reformed community. It has been there since the Reformation. After the war, 60 Orthodox Serbian families were colonised in this village. They had no priest so they went to the services in the Reformed church. The Reformed pastor baptised their children, he united them in marriage and buried them. Now by initiation of the Reformed pastor, an Orthodox community had been formed. They held their first service in the Reformed church on the second Orthodox Christmas Day. On this occasion the pastor received the Orthodox priest in the entrance of the church with a fraternal kiss. The Reformed Choir sang and both communities were present at the service.

E.P.S. Geneva

FRANCEVisit of German Students

For the first time since the war, over thirty German students have been able to go to France. The visit was arranged by the "Cimade" Centre attached to the University of Mainz (see E.P.S. No. 42, 1947). The students had been chosen for their activity in their "university parish" and were divided into two groups, one of which was received in the Vosges and the other in the Central Massif by the French Student Christian Movement. The discussions concerned the most pressing problems of the present time, both political and religious. There was a fine sense of the deep unity imparted by experience of the same Liberator. Although it was not always possible to find "solutions", it was proved that far from creating an artificial paradise, faith is a gateway to the realities of this world.

E.P.S. Geneva

SWEDENCollections for Bibles

The Swedish Bible Society, under the directorship of Pastor Olle Nystedt, has collected a large sum to purchase raw materials for printing Bibles for Germany. This sum has been used to purchase and transport 150 tons of wood pulp for the Hilfswerk of the Evangelical Churches in Germany. It is intended for printing pocket Bibles and New Testaments destined for the Russian Zone. A short time ago the Russian authorities gave permission to the Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, which is controlled by the Church, to print Bibles and other literature needed for Christian work.

E.P.S. Geneva

JAPANThe Creed of the "Church of Christ"

After months of discussion and study, the Committee on Creed of the "Church of Christ in Japan" (in which were coming together in unity a large number of the Churches in Japan - see E.P.S. No. 1) has drafted the following creed which it is now submitting to the whole Church:

"Believing that the Old and New Testaments, which are the Word of God, are the infallible basis of our faith and life; accepting as a valuable heritage of the historic Church since the days of the Apostles the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed which, being based upon the Bible, the ancient Church confessed; and standing on the faith of the Gospel which the Reformers and others clarified; we are united by the following confession:

"We believe in God the Father Who is the Creator of all things.

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, His only Son, Who, descending from heaven, became a man for our salvation, died on the Cross for the redemption of our sins; He arose, ascended unto heaven, and as the ever-living high priest intercedes for us.

We believe in the Holy Spirit Who, emerging from the Father and the Son, testifies of the Son in us.

We believe the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, being three, are one God.

We believe that we are united with the Lord Jesus Christ by this faith, are forgiven and justified, sanctified, and made partakers of eternal life.

We believe that, until the day, when the Lord comes again and accomplishes His Kingdom, the Church into which we are called by this faith, is the holy and

only Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is present on earth as the visible Church, giving us fellowship through the Holy Spirit, and executing the task of reconciling the world with God through the preaching of the Gospel and the observance of the Holy Sacraments."

E.P.S. Geneva

Report of World Conference of Christian Youth, Oslo, 1947

The official report on the Youth Conference held last summer in Oslo has now appeared under the title "The Report of the Second World Conference of Christian Youth". It is published by the organisations which were responsible for arranging the Conference, namely the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches, the World's Y.W.C.A., the World Alliance of Y.M.C.A.s and the World's Student Christian Federation. On the outer cover appears an enlarged reproduction of the Conference sign, which was designed by the Norwegian preparatory committee. It represents a young man, rising from prayer and reaching out to the world - symbolised by the circle - under the Cross of Christ, symbol of "Jesus Christ is Lord", the theme of the Conference.

Another singular fact about the report is that it was printed by German prisoners of war in England. "Growing out of its interest in the work of the Y.M.C.A. for prisoners of war, the British Government gave permission for the Association to establish a publishing house which would use the labour of German prisoners. In this publishing house, the Dragon Press, thousands of copies of German books, for use in prisoner of war camps, are printed weekly. In view of the great interest shown by the four initiating organisations of the Oslo Conference in the work for prisoners of war, this publishing house considers it a great honour to print the official report of the Conference."

This report (in English only) may be obtained from the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches, 17 route de Malagnou, Geneva, price 4 Swiss francs.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY

A Fatal Mistake

Siegfried Leffler, formerly national organiser of the "Deutsche Christen" in Thuringia (who sought to combine National-Socialism and Christianity and were therefore the adversaries of the Confessing Church), has been sentenced by a court of justice to a year in a work-camp.

Leffler writes as follows to the head of the Evangelical Press Union of Württemberg, Pastor Hutten: "I believed in a synthesis between National Socialism and Christianity and this was a fatal mistake. For the cause of German Christianity it was all the more terrible and disastrous because I was its representative in all sincerity on the "religious" sector. But the sincerity with which I struggled to reconcile two worlds which were diametrically opposed does not exonerate me. Soon after the war broke out, and especially today, I am tormented by the thought that through the attitude, actions and speeches of myself and my friends I have been guilty of a sin against the Christian Church, and against the German and the Jewish people. If I had pointed to God's Word, in its guiding and redeeming truth... and should have shown more confidence in honourable people within the Church, I could never have regarded the Jews from the racial standpoint as the natural enemies of the German people. This last idea oppresses me most of all, and with all my heart I wish now to retract..."

E.P.S. Geneva

